

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method of alleviating problems associated with delays in accessing data on a network, comprising the steps of:

- (a) accessing data on a network from a client computer;
- (b) identifying when a delay occurs during the accessing step; and
- (c) presenting filler contents on the client computer during the identified delay, wherein the filler contents are customized to a user's taste.

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2. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are pre-selected.

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3. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are selected from a group comprising text data, graphics data, audio data, and audiovisual data.

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4. The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are selected from a group comprising static filler contents and dynamic filler contents.

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5. The method of claim 1 above, further comprising the step of automatically selecting the filler content based on predetermined criteria.

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6. The method of claim 5 above, wherein the filler contents are selected based on the accessed data.

1           7.     The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are stored on  
2     the client computer.

*sub 2*  
1           8.     The method of claim 7 above, further comprising the step of storing the  
2     filler contents in a repository on the client computer.

1           9.     The method of claim 1 above, wherein the filler contents are stored on a  
2     server computer connected to the network.

*sub 3*  
1           10.    The method of claim 9 above, further comprising the step of retrieving  
2     the filler content from the server computer connected to the network.

1           11.    The method of claim 1 above, wherein the identifying step is performed  
2     either at the client computer or at a server computer connected to the network

1           12.    The method of claim 1 above, wherein the presenting step further  
2     comprises the step of presenting the filler contents without interrupting the accessing  
3     of the data from the network.

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1           13.    The method of claim 1 above, further comprising the step of  
2    deactivating the presenting step when the accessing of the data on the network is  
3    complete.

1           14.    A computer program carrier readable by a computer and embodying  
2    one or more instructions that executable by the computer to perform method steps for  
3    alleviating problems associated with delays in accessing data on a network, the method  
4    comprising the steps of:

- 5           (a) accessing data on a network from a client computer;  
6           (b) identifying when a delay occurs during the accessing step; and  
7           (c) presenting filler contents on the client computer during the identified delay,  
8    wherein the filler contents are customized to a user's taste.

1           15.    An apparatus for alleviating problems associated with delays in accessing  
2    data on a network, comprising:

- 3           (a) a client computer connected to the network;  
4           (b) a browser, executed by the client computer, for accessing data on the  
5    network; and  
6           (c) a filler engine, executed by the client computer, for presenting filler content  
7    on the client computer when a delay occurs in the accessing of the data on the  
8    network, , wherein the filler contents are customized to a user's taste.

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1           16.    The apparatus of claim 15 above, further comprising a content receiver  
2   for retrieving the filler content from a server on the network.

1           17.    The apparatus of claim 16 above, wherein the filler engine requests the  
2   filler contents from the content receiver and the content receiver retrieves the filler  
3   contents from a server on the network for the filler engine.

1           18.    The apparatus of claim 15 above, further comprising a repository, stored  
2   on the client computer, for storing the filler contents.

1           19.    The apparatus of claim 18 above, further comprising a content receiver  
2   for retrieving the filler content from a server on the network and for storing the  
3   retrieved filler content in the repository.

1           20.    The apparatus of claim 19 above, wherein the filler engine further  
2   comprises means for retrieving the filler content from the repository.

1           21.    The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine further  
2   comprises means for initiating use of the filler content when appropriate.

1           22.    The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine is an  
2   extension to the browser.

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1           23.    The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine is a  
2    component separate from the browser.

1           24.    The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine displays the  
2    filler contents without interrupting the accessing of the data from the network.

1           25.    The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein the filler engine deactivates  
2    when the accessing of the data from the network is complete.

1           26.    The apparatus of claim 15 above, wherein a server on the network  
2    transmits the delay information through the browser to the filler engine and the filler  
3    engine retrieves the filler contents from the repository in response thereto.

*add a5)*

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